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MAY 16, 2025 | VOLUME 16 | ISSUE 11

YOUR PURCHASE BENEFITS THE VENDORS.
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GROUNDCOVER

NEWS AND SOLUTIONS FROM THE GROUND UP | WASHTENAW COUNTY, MICH.

Ypsilanti Food Co-op celebrates 50 years serving the community. page 6

International Network of Street Papers

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Groundcover acrostic poem winner

Getting by is not good enough,

Respecting ones who've got it rough

Offers hope and dignity,

Understanding, not pity.

Not a charity, but a right —

Damn right — a safe place at night,

Compassion and support by day,

Opportunity for work and pay.

Veterans of the streets, may

Each of you be returned,

Renewed, to the rightful place you've earned.

By Laszlo Slomovitz

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GROUNDCOVER NEWS

PROVIDING ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES FOR SELF-DETERMINED INDIVIDUALS IMPACTED BY POVERTY, **PRODUCING A STREET NEWSPAPER** THAT GIVES A PLATFORM TO UNDERREPRESENTED VOICES IN WASHTENAW COUNTY, **PROMOTING AN ACTION** TO BUILD A JUST, CARING AND INCLUSIVE SOCIETY.

Groundcover News, a 501(c)(3) organization, was founded in April 2010 as a means to empower low-income persons to make the transitions from homeless to housed, and from jobless to employed.

Vendors purchase each copy of our regular editions of Groundcover News at our office for 50 cents. This money goes towards production costs. Vendors work selling the paper on the street for $2, keeping all income and tips from each sale.

Street papers like Groundcover News exist in cities all over the United States, as well as in more than 40 other countries, in an effort to raise awareness of the plight of homeless people and combat the increase in poverty. Our paper is a proud member of the International Network of Street Papers.

STAFF

Lindsay Calka — *publisher*

Cynthia Price — *editor*

ISSUE CONTRIBUTORS

Elizabeth Bauman
Pedro Campos
Jim Clark
Amanda Gale
Jonathan Glass
Mike Jones
Didem Kochan
Ken Parks
Denise Shearer
Steven
Shawn Swoffer

PROOFREADERS

Susan Beckett
Zachary Dortzbach
Steve Ross
Anabel Sicko
Allison Wei

VOLUNTEERS

Jane Atkins
Jessi Averill
Sim Bose
Jud Branam
Yumna Dagher
Luiza Duarte Caetano
Regina Duerst
Jacob Fallman
Glenn Gates
Bella Martinez
Robert Klingler
Ari Ruczynski
Mary Wisgerhof
Max Wisgerhof
Melanie Wenzel

CONTACT US

Story and photo submissions:
submissions@groundcovernews.com

Advertising and partnerships:
contact@groundcovernews.com

Office: 423 S. 4th Ave., Ann Arbor
Mon-Sat, 11 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Phone: 734-263-2098

@groundcovernews
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1/2	$375.00	$500.00	5 X 13 or 10.25 X 6.5
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Additional **20%** discount for money saving coupons

MEET YOUR VENDOR

Marius Johnson, vendor No. 672

In one sentence, who are you?
Marius Johnson.

Where do you usually sell Groundcover?
Main Street and State Street.

When and why did you start selling Groundcover?
I started about six weeks ago and my friend suggested I try it out.

What is one place in Ann Arbor that feels like your own personal sanctuary?
The Northside of Ann Arbor.

What's your life motto?
Do it big or don't do it at all.

What advice would you give to your younger self?
Don't get distracted.

What is your comfort food?
Italian and Chinese.

If you were stranded on a desert island and could only bring 3 things, what would they be? Water, shelter, food.

If there was a theme song for your life, what would it be?
"Under Ground Kings" by Drake

If you could travel anywhere, where would you go?
Space.

What is the weirdest food combo you swear by?
Fries and milkshakes.

What change would you like to see in Washtenaw County?
More of people trying to help each other.

Revolutionary love

KEN PARKS
Groundcover vendor No. 490

Spring has sprung and spring is the time of rebirth. Revolutionary love is born again.

I recently clicked on the Facebook prompt, "What's On Your Mind?" I posted, "Revolutionary love, let's get in compliance with the heart of reality." I chose the pretty symbol for the word heart. I tagged 50 people and so far got a few responses. The word compliance has a psychic burden. Maybe revolutionary love is not in compliance with the cultural framework that confuses love with romance and revolution with the past.

On the other hand, advertising turns those two words into separate commodities. In the 60s and 70s many of us signed our writing Love/Struggle.

Valerie Kaur has some TED talks on Revolutionary Love. Her children's book "World of Wonder" is coming soon. She is on my list for continuing education. When her tour bus was at the Ann Arbor library, the public hall on the main floor was packed. The energy was clearlight radiant. I walked in as the program was beginning. I found a seat in the front row. I could hear Valerie Kaur tell the story of the Sikh tradition and the evolution of revolutionary love! Of course I gifted her a Groundcover News.

We are at a tipping point for a more complete understanding of what it means to be a human being. The struggle for genuine freedom is entering a new phase. As Antonio Gramsci said, "We are in a time of monsters."

We will rise to the challenge when we are ready for the heart of reality. Appearances are holy in their impermanence but will break your heart if you attach to them. Obsessive compulsive disorders will be healed and control freaks will dissolve into the vast expanse of sunyata (the Buddhist concept of "emptiness").

Jack Kruse, neurosurgeon, quantum biologist and polymath, shows us that reality is not centralized and all our schemes to be masters of the machine blow back, with unintended consequences that destroy the beauty of natural law. Natural law is often invoked by bourgeois intellectuals as if it supports only their assumptions. Many of us learned to spell "assume" and then its perils: It makes an ASS of U and ME.

Compliance often refers to the chain of command bureaucratic social/political/economic order.

Rules are important and work best when there is consensus for their intention and the subsequent exceptions to the rule. When rules appear as an order from the chain of command, we will find increasing dysfunction.

Challenging the status quo becomes even more important as the tide of chaos rises. Authoritarian thinking is based on a supremacism that is marching naked in the street. It does not care if it loses as long as it takes everything down with it. This nihilism and cynicism finds a home in many broken hearts.

The cure is to heal ourselves using the faith that we sing and pray about. A teacher is near. There are countless spiritual friends who help you grow your faith in the sacred nature that is dormant in so many hearts.

Open your eyes and explore whatever appears. Discriminating awareness is a better approach than fixating compulsively on anything.

I have written about natural breath many times and have to admit I am still a beginner. Khenpo Choephel at the Karuna Buddhist Center has pointed the way towards the next step on the stages of the path to liberation. The discipline to start the day with a focus that benefits self and others is a breakthrough of revolutionary love. Compassion and loving-kindness will become a habit as we mature. The Karuna Buddhist Center has upcoming events for Shayamuni Buddha and his expression of revolutionary love.

DARE TO STRUGGLE, DARE TO WIN is an important slogan for the working class. The struggle to realize the seamless nature of body, speech and mind and experience the interrelatedness of everything is the freedom that both politics and religion refer to. I believe we can do this. Groundcover will help you discover Revolutionary Love. It's beyond sexy!

The new Snow White movie

DENISE SHEARER
Groundcover vendor No. 485

Me and my boyfriend, Richard, went to see Snow White — the new, live-action version — and it was a great movie. The movie was so beautiful. The story was just like the original animated "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs" but it was better because it had all races and colors of people in it. The movie seemed more real.

It had very pretty colors and animals and beautiful nature and fruits and vegetables in it. I like the seven dwarfs, too. They were funny and they helped Snow White and her friends a lot.

The movie was about people working together in friendships and family. It was about a community of people working together and caring about each other even though there was an evil queen in power. They had fun together cooking and they enjoyed each other's company. It shows how there can be love and happiness even when a person of power is evil and in control.

"Snow White" is a great story about caring and being loyal to your friends no matter what; it shows that love overpowers evil.

People in the neighborhood: Robinn

JIM CLARK
Groundcover vendor No. 139

This is Robinn's story.

Robinn was born in Detroit in 1990 and now resides in Ypsilanti. She did not say much about her upbringing or young adulthood except that she was sent to prison early on. In 11th grade, Robinn committed armed robbery and fled. She was found two years later, attempting to live a normal life, and spent the next two years in prison.

Robinn: I did go back for my GED through a program they had and then I went to college at Wayne Community College. Then I was homeless again, and then I went to Washtenaw Community College.

Jim: What did you study?

Robinn: Social Work.

Jim: What would you need to continue?

Robinn: I was told that to go further, I would have to see a judge because of the felony. That's what's keeping me from going back to college; I got sent to prison for some things I did in my past. That and being homeless makes it hard.

Jim: What's keeping you homeless?

Robinn: Really just trying to climb out of it you know. Between jobs and trying to keep myself stable, climbing out of that gets kind of hard. And then I get depressed so then it becomes a lack of me being responsible, you know, so after a while I just kind of give up.

Jim: People who have never been homeless or housing-insecure seem to think people who are homeless because of substance abuse choose to do it, even though it's ruining their life. What's your take on this?

Robinn: To be quite frank, most people out there don't give a fuck anymore about what people think about their drinking and smoking cause they're going to do what they're going to do for right now and when they're ready they'll stop. I have those days myself where it's like "I'm gonna drink and that's just that." Not smart.

We do have a choice. But here's the thing — when you're out there, you can hope to get off the street, but the task is so daunting, it becomes easy to escape in a bottle. You may sweat having to pay your car insurance and phone bill in the same week, but when you don't know where you're going to sleep, or if it's going to be safe, where you're getting your food from, and feeling like no one gives a shit about you, the numbness of being high or drunk is very appealing.

However, whether people know it or not, we talk about quitting. We actually help a lot of our friends, when we see them getting too incapacitated we take the drink and say to them "save it 'til tomorrow, you're not getting anymore."

Jim: What would you need now to get shelter and support?

Robinn: I know Pathways and other community outreach programs around here have been helping me get back on track. And so just by me staying in contact with them and handling my part as far as making sure I get a job. Which I did; I start working for Pastor Anna tomorrow.

Robinn is in a niche known as "the working homeless."* She is referring to the FedUp food truck ministry run by Pastor Anna Taylor-McCants. FedUp serves free meals to the street community in Ypsilanti and Ann Arbor. Robinn works on the food truck. Learn more in "Warning: Homeless People at Work" in the January 24, 2025 edition of Groundcover News.

Jim: What's it like working while being unsheltered?

Robinn: It's hard when you're sleeping outside. You wake up in the morning and are around people in the community, they kind of irritate you, you know. I mean, you try to give them a sandwich even though they tried to fight you yesterday.

People living without reliable housing often congregate in public places. Having no other recourse, they go to the same community meals, bus stations, libraries and street corners. Being around the same people, struggling, day in and day out, can be draining.

Robinn was one of many that spent time at the site of the downtown Ypsilanti farmer's market (Growing Hope — 16 S. Washington). The summers of 2023 and 2024 saw a series of skirmishes between the city, the police, the unsheltered residents of the street and FedUp Ministries. I invited Robinn to talk about her experience.

Robinn: Those were two of the hardest summers of my life. But it showed me that the homeless community will come together within ourselves and help each other get through it. We kept each other safe. It was a lot, there were situations I had to fight to save my life. Especially being a gay woman, it can be hard. People try to take advantage of you.

Jim: If someone wanted to give you a free ride to college but wanted you to say why you deserve it, what would you say?

Robinn: If we provide people with opportunities to heal and grow, that will improve our community's economy. Instead of people walking around asking for money, they will spend money. If the citizens of Ypsilanti want a vibrant downtown community then they need to start funding people's education, and provide them with programs to teach trade skills and then offer them jobs. Then they could pull themselves up by their bootstraps. Because to pull yourself up by your bootstraps, you first need boots.

Robinn wants to save the world and build better communities.

Why do I deserve it? Because why not? I deserve it because I'm a human being. A good human being. If college helps a person further themselves in life, why can you not get it for free? It's going to pay for itself. Eventually we will pay it back, in a sense. We're going to spend money in the community. It's going to come back, I mean isn't that the whole idea?

I could be the one trying to change the world and help build better communities. I've had so many experiences in my life personally and I can use it to bring to the people you can't reach otherwise. Me learning social work for my community is going to help me as well. It would be a great success story and then more success stories would come from that.

Groundcover acrostic honorable mentions

Growing community one paper at a time
Reading about the lives of avoided people
Once known can never be unknown
Uplifting our spirit
Neighbors found and valued
Discovering our lives in others
Coming to know our connections
Opening our hearts to each other
Voice we learn to hear
Enjoying the moment to interact
Recovering the common ground we had lost.

By Louise Gorenflo

Growing
Reaching
Owning our past
Using it to
Name our nemeses
Doing what it takes to
Convert pain to gain
Opening hands and hearts
Valuing each other
Every day
Renewed and renewing

By Susan Beckett

God
Reigns
Our
Umbrella
New
Day
Creates
Others
Venues
Everyone
Rejoice

By Tarya Simo

Meet Joe Giant: Ann Arbor's new Economic Development Director

LINDSAY CALKA
Publisher

March 17 was Joe Giant's first day as Economic Development Director. Giant is the first person to hold this position in the City of Ann Arbor.

Briefly describe your role as Economic Development Director.

This is a new position for Ann Arbor, though similar roles exist in most other municipalities. The department works with businesses, residents and community stakeholders to pursue projects, programs and policies that support the City's vision for sustainable growth. This can include anything from helping a new business navigate the permitting process, to negotiating major redevelopment projects, to collaborating with community partners on plans for evolving corridors and neighborhoods.

What are your goals, aspirations for this position?

My goal is to help implement the community's shared vision for high-quality, sustainable and inclusive economic development. That might sound broad, but it's grounded in real direction, particularly in the draft Comprehensive Plan, which is our community's overall long-term vision for growth and development, and it reflects deep public engagement and consensus on how Ann Arbor should grow.

In practice, that means supporting housing development at all income levels, growing the tax base through smart, well-designed projects, improving the City's internal processes to make it easier to move good ideas forward, and helping connect businesses with the tools and resources they need to thrive.

What excites you most about doing this work in Ann Arbor, Michigan?

This position brings together my passions for planning, placemaking and development, making it a perfect fit — especially in a city I've long admired.

As an urban planner, I often heard Ann Arbor held up as a model of innovation and creativity. When I moved back to my hometown of Fort Wayne, Indiana, nearly a decade ago, I made a point to visit Ann Arbor — and I kept coming back. The city's energy, its vibrant public spaces, and its strong sense of place really stuck with me. Eventually, I joked that I needed to stop visiting before I just packed up and moved here. And now, I'm thrilled to be raising my family in a community with such great schools, parks and neighborhoods.

Economic growth more times than not means economic growth for the few, at the expense of the many. How will you champion economic development for all, particularly poor and working class people?

I believe it's essential to remember that Ann Arbor is a city, not an amenity for students or a ritzy suburb. Cities are complex systems that need balance in order to thrive. That means being inclusive, not exclusive. If someone wants to live in a city, they should be able to. When that's possible, everyone benefits: people feel a greater sense of pride, belonging, and investment in their community.

But when teachers, firefighters, caregivers, and other essential workers can't afford to live here, or when promising businesses are priced out before they can grow, or when creatives and young professionals leave for more affordable places, we all lose something vital. We lose the diversity, dynamism and vibrancy that make cities truly special.

As this office evolves, I'll be focused on several key strategies. First, expanding the supply of housing at all income levels to help stabilize costs. Second, removing barriers that prevent new businesses from opening or scaling. And third, ensuring City government is accessible, efficient, and solutions-oriented—so that it becomes a partner in progress, not a barrier to it.

Fortunately, I've already had the chance to meet with many people who are doing important work in these areas. By building on their efforts and addressing the challenges only local government is positioned to solve, we can work toward a more inclusive, resilient and high-performing economy.

What are your thoughts on guaranteed income programs?

I'm aware of these programs, but I haven't yet had the opportunity to study them in enough detail to comment meaningfully. I look forward to learning more.

How do you envision Ann Arbor protecting and supporting gig workers in our local economy?

I spent nearly eight years after college as a gig worker myself, so I remember well how uncertain and exposed that work can feel. The term has broadened over time to cover many types of independent and flexible work, but the vulnerabilities remain.

For my office to be effective, we need to respond to evolving economic realities, including changes in how people work. That means staying in close contact with the private sector and keeping an open feedback loop with businesses and workers alike. While some challenges facing gig workers — like healthcare access — are beyond the City's control, we still have an important role to play. Gig workers contribute tremendously to the local economy and quality of life, yet they're often disconnected from traditional support networks and may lack a unified voice. Recognizing their importance and making space for their needs in local policy and economic planning is essential to a truly inclusive economy.

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Unusual Stuff to Borrow
There's more to borrow at AADL than books, music, and movies. To name a few, there are games, telescopes, stories-to-go kits, and home tools. Check out these unusual yet handy items during your next library visit.

Michigan Activity Pass
With a valid library card from any Michigan public library, you can print a pass to participating organizations, including museums and state parks, through the Michigan Activity Pass website. Some partners offer complimentary or reduced-price admission; others, gift shop discounts and exclusive offers.

FEATURED EVENT

Wednesday, June 4 • 11am–4pm
Downtown Library
The 2025 VISIONS Vendor Fair features a variety of exhibitors demonstrating the latest products and services for the blind, visually impaired, and physically disabled, along with presentations on topics related to vision health, services, and assistive technology. Check out aadl.org/visions for more!

Ypsilanti Food Co-op celebrates 50 years serving the community

MIKE JONES
Groundcover vendor No. 113

Corinne Sikorski, general manager of the Ypsilanti Food Co-op, started as a volunteer in 1975.

There is an old saying, you are what you eat. In other words, if you choose to eat healthy, more than likely you will be a healthier person. Since April 11, 1975, the Ypsilanti Food Co-op has been providing the community with fresh organic food and ingredients, leading to a healthy community.

We who live in Washtenaw County are fortunate to have a variety of establishments to go to and purchase healthy food products in order to sustain life. And we who live in Ypsilanti are especially lucky to have the Ypsilanti Food Co-op. The thirteen hundred members and people who work and shop at Ypsilanti Food Co-op are mindful of a healthy community through the means of local food products and ingredients.

I got a chance to sit and talk with Corinne Sikorski, the general manager of the Ypsi Food Co-op. She moved to Ypsilanti from Rochester Hills to attend Eastern Michigan University in 1974, and began volunteering and working at the Ypsilanti Food Co-op in 1975. She explained why she got into the food co-op business.

In the 1970s there were few healthy food options. She was a vegetarian at the time and interested in healthy eating. Food like that was not available in the dorms. She would eat salads and yogurt. She explained that the yogurt was really bad back then because it had gelatin and sugar in it. So, she went looking for other food options and she learned about the Ypsilanti Food Co-op.

Shortly after, Corinne started volunteering at the food co-op. Every Sunday she would volunteer as a cashier because back then they had no paid staff; everybody volunteered and pooled their resources to make things work.

According to Google, a cooperative (or co-op) is a business owned and controlled by its members, who collectively benefit from its services and profits. These businesses are democratically managed, with each member having a vote in electing the board of directors. Cooperatives aim to meet the common economic, social and cultural needs of their members.

Corinne told me how the people before her would work together to get healthy food for numerous years before opening a store. People would put in their orders and leave their money in a trash can chained to a pole outside someone's house. They would travel to Ann Arbor and the Eastern Market in Detroit to get food like cider, cheese and produce that were not readily available at that time in local grocery stores in the Ypsilanti area. These young, health-conscious entrepreneurs finally opened their own food co-op that had bulk food. It was located by the Ypsilanti water tower at 955 Sheridan.

In February 1984, the Ypsilanti Food Co-op found a new home at 312 North River Street in Depot Town. This location is where this community based cooperative would make its mark in the Ypsilanti area by providing a variety of food choices like organic produce in Ypsi's most cherished space. It is also Michigan's only solar powered grocery store!

According to Google, organic, in the context of food, means a product that is grown or raised using natural substances and practices, with a focus on soil health, biodiversity and ecological balance. Specifically, it involves avoiding synthetic pesticides and fertilizers for produce, and for animal products it means avoiding the use of growth hormones and antibiotics.

Corinne went on to explain that in the 70s, food stores like Kroger, Farmers Jacks and Meijer didn't have many fresh vegetables, they only carried canned or frozen vegetables. The only time one could get fresh vegetables was in the summertime at local farmers markets. One also couldn't buy brown rice in regular grocery stores, only in nutrition supplement stores; but now you can find these items in all grocery stores nationwide.

I asked Corinne if the healthy organic food option took off quickly back in the 70s. She answered that it didn't because people were not that knowledgeable about organic food, and people looked at us as crazy hippie kids that didn't know what they were talking about. Plus, there were no Whole Foods stores or Trader Joe's at the time; these stores would ultimately popularize organic food products.

see **CO-OP** page 11 ➡

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• apartment furnishings
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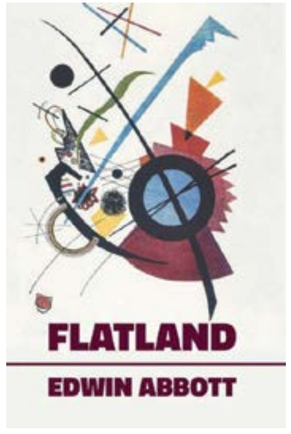
A world of sharp angles and sharper opinions

Book review: Flatland — A Romance of Many Dimensions



DIDEM KOCHAN
Groundcover contributor

Step right up and enter Flatland, a world where you do not need an elevator! Imagine living in a place where up and down do not exist, where all the inhabitants are geometric figures, your social status is determined by the number of sides you have, and where women are, well ... sharp and dangerous.

This bizarre, two-dimensional world was brought to life in Flatland, a novel by Edwin A. Abbott — and it is much more than a geometry lesson. At first glance, the book seems like a whimsical mathematical fairy tale, but soon you realize it is also a satire, a social commentary, and a mind-blowing exploration of what lies beyond the limits. It is a book that makes you laugh at its absurdities until you realize it is holding up a mirror to your own world and challenges your understanding of what is real.

To fully appreciate Flatland, we must understand that the author lived in Britain during the Victorian era. It is a period where industrialization reshaped British society, but the class separations not only remained but deepened. This was an era of progress and inequality, reflected in events such as the Titanic disaster. Meanwhile, mathematics was undergoing its own revolution. The field of non-Euclidean geometry was gaining interest among mathematicians, challenging traditional approaches, just like Flatland does.

The protagonist and narrator of this story is A. Square, an inhabitant of the two-dimensional world of Flatland. In Flatland, social hierarchy is not built upon wealth, wisdom or virtue but on geometric regularity. Triangles form the laboring class, with their sharp angles signifying their low status. Squares and Pentagons enjoy middle-class respectability, while the ruling elite consists of multi-sided Polygons who, through generations of refinement, gradually evolve into Circles, the highest class, divine beings of Flatland, the priests. This strict classification is upheld with absolute rigidity. Any deviation from 'perfection' of regularity, any irregularity in angles, is seen not as an individual characteristic but as a dangerous anomaly. Such individuals are not merely excluded, they are eradicated. Order must be preserved at all costs.

Women in Flatland are paradoxically both feared and ignored. As razor-thin straight lines, they are seen as physically dangerous yet intellectually inferior, too emotional and unfit for education. Their exclusion from intellectual life is not a matter of oversight but of deliberate design. Women cannot reason, learn and worst of all, they cannot evolve. Men in Flatland, on the other hand, are the rational ones, the philosophers. Male figures can pass on their sides to future generations, increasing their status over time, while women remain as single lines, never progressing in shape or standing.

The Color Revolt, a brief but significant episode in Flatland's history, underscores the anxieties of its society. When color was introduced, it initially promised individuality and progress, but its dangers soon became apparent. The issue arose when women could manipulate their appearance by shading their sharp edges, allowing them to imitate the esteemed Circles. This was intolerable, not just a threat to the ruling class, but a dangerous hint that women, given the chance, might get an education, learn politics or even seize power. In response, the ruling class quickly declared color to be a dangerous threat to social order and banned this brief experiment in individual expression. The world returned to its proper, boring and obedient state.

After introducing us to Flatland and its social organization, our narrator, A. Square, shares his own journey of discovery. As a middle-class resident in Flatland, he considers himself a rational and enlightened thinker. When he visits Lineland, a one-dimensional world where inhabitants can only perceive forward and backward, he attempts to explain the wonders of two-dimensional existence. The poor Linelanders are incapable of comprehending his words. With no concept of left or right how could they possibly understand a second dimension? Their existence is so deeply limited to their singular way of perceiving reality that any alternative is considered as insanity.

Our A. Square, observing their ignorance, views himself as superior to Linelanders. But here is a twist – he soon finds himself in an analogous situation when his grandson dares to suggest the possibility of a third dimension. Just as the Linelanders rejected his ideas, he rejects his grandson's. They have forward and backward, left and right, but how about up and down? There is no evidence of such a thing, so it cannot exist.

However, this belief has to change when our A. Square encounters a character from Spaceland, a three-dimensional realm. The Sphere attempts to reveal the existence of a higher dimension. At first, A. Square is in complete denial. His perception is limited to the two-dimensional plane, and he cannot conceive of a reality beyond it. But when the Sphere lifts him out of Flatland, he experiences a revelation. For the first time, he sees his world from above and perceives it in a way that was previously unimaginable. He now understands what he once thought impossible: the third dimension is real!

Just when he is ready to embrace the idea of the third dimension, he makes a critical mistake and asks, "Could there be a fourth dimension?" Well, that is a big no. The Sphere, despite being regarded as superior in the Square's eyes, reacts with the same dismissal that our Square once exhibited toward his grandson. The cycle repeats itself.

Even the Sphere, supposedly enlightened, balks at the next step. Even those who consider themselves enlightened often fail to see beyond their own limitations. This realization shakes our Square to his core; now that he has tasted the truth, he cannot go back to being ignorant. He realizes how small Flatland really is, how much more there is to the universe that he once assumed was impossible. He begins to reflect on the nature of existence, the limits of their knowledge, and the possibility that reality is far greater than what is immediately perceivable. In the words of the Monarch of Spaceland, "the joy of thought, the joy of being." What a revelation!

Abbott's novel, despite being written in 1884, feels as relevant today as ever. It is about us, about how our society resists change, how those in power cling to their authority and how new ideas are often neglected until they become undeniable. This book is not just a mathematical curiosity or a social critique, it is an intellectual adventure. In this adventure, we find an invitation to explore, to question, and to embrace the unknown. Much like episodes of TV show Black Mirror, Flatland forces us to expand our limits. It reminds us that the greatest barriers to understanding are often the ones we create for ourselves. As we turn the final pages, we are left with a challenge: just as the Flatlanders could not see beyond their two-dimensional existence, could we, trapped in three-dimensions, be blind to a reality beyond our comprehension?

So, whether you love mathematics or philosophy or simply enjoy imaginative storytelling, dare to enter Flatland. Let your mind stretch beyond its familiar edges. You might just discover new dimensions, both in the book and within yourself.

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From prison to purpose: Adam Grant's journey

JONATHAN GLASS
Home of New Vision

"I don't believe in exceptionalism," said Adam Grant. "It's a lot of hard work that gets the job done — and anyone can do it." Today, Adam Grant serves as executive director of A Brighter Way, an Ypsilanti-based nonprofit helping people re-enter society after incarceration. His message is simple but powerful: anyone can change, given support and opportunity.

A life transformed

When Grant committed his first robbery at age 12, it wasn't about money — it was about survival, identity and the limited options he saw in front of him. "I accepted that I didn't have the opportunities that others were lucky to have, so I took the reins," he said. His mother was just 15 when he was born, and though they have a strong relationship now, his childhood was filled with uncertainty. "I lovingly tell her she was the best big sister anyone could ever ask for."

Grant would go on to serve a 27 to 50-year sentence for robbery. But prison, while brutal, became the unlikely backdrop for transformation. "It wasn't like goodness was rewarded," he said, "but the resistance made me more determined."

Ten years into his sentence, Grant began to shift gears. "I realized I had nothing to lose by pursuing an honest life." He became a peer leader, cell block representative, and advocate. He also joined Indian Nations United and the NAACP chapter behind bars. It was there that he discovered the power of his own voice.

"I started to realize that if I really meant what I said, I could make good connections with people."

Grant's turning point came in stages — quitting drinking in 1997 after a correctional officer discovered he was making prison hooch, and quitting drugs in 2003 after smoking a joint and realizing he no longer liked who he was.

Then, one act of kindness changed everything.

He befriended a fellow inmate whose life was in danger and, later, received a letter from a woman thanking him for helping her cousin. They began writing. Over time, their bond deepened. One year after Grant's release in 2020, they were married.

"She's still my person," he said with a smile.

Reentry and leadership

Prior to being released, Grant became a certified peer recovery coach. Released during the pandemic, Grant immediately put his recovery certification to work. He was hired as a peer recovery coach at Parkside Family Counseling in Adrian, then later at Home of New Vision in Jackson.

That momentum led him to A Brighter Way, where he now leads a staff of eight — all of whom have lived experience with incarceration, totaling 144 years combined. The nonprofit focuses on individualized support for formerly incarcerated people trying to rebuild their lives.

"Everybody's reentry is different," Grant said. "We meet people where they are."

With plans to expand into Ingham, Eaton, Clinton and Jackson counties, Grant envisions growing the staff to 25 over the next five years. "We're expanding. The need is there."

Asked what advice he gives to those reentering society, Grant said, "The best time to begin planning your reentry is day one, but if you've been released, and don't have a plan, give

Adam Grant, director of A Brighter Way

overnight, but if you put the work in, you'll get a better quality of life."

His parting words? "Find your tribe. Do everything you can to be a productive member of your community. I'm a firm believer that nothing happens in this world without relationship."

That's why A Brighter Way stands on the motto: "Reentry through Relationship."

Need support after incarceration? A Brighter Way is located 124 Pearl Street, Suite 304, Ypsilanti, MI 48197 734-905-7040, www.abrighterway.org

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Sudoku ★★★★☆☆ 4puz.com

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4		6						
3				8		6	5	
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	4		7					
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Fill in the squares so that each row, column, and 3-by-3 box contain the numbers 1 through 9.

Groundcover Vendor Code

While Groundcover is a non-profit, and paper vendors are self-employed contractors, we still have expectations of how vendors should conduct themselves while selling and representing the paper.

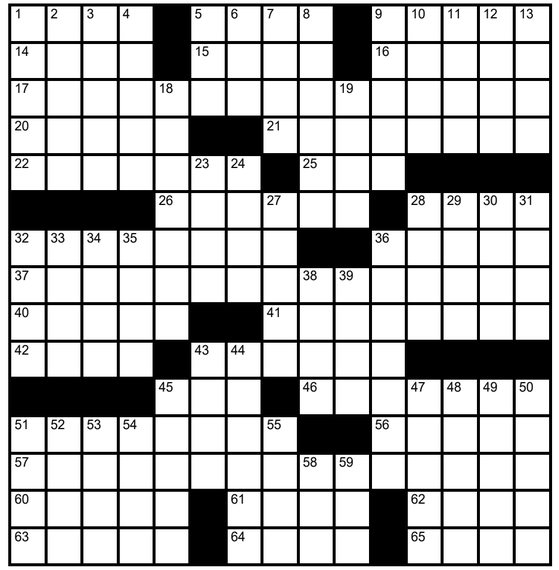
The following is our **Vendor Code of Conduct**, which every vendor reads and signs before receiving a badge and papers. We request that if you discover a vendor violating any tenets of the Code, please contact us and provide as many details as possible. Our paper and our vendors should be positively impacting our County.

- Groundcover will be distributed for a voluntary donation. I agree not to ask for more than the cover price or solicit donations by any other means.
- When selling Groundcover, I will always have the current biweekly issue of Groundcover available for customer purchase.
- I agree not to sell additional goods or products when selling the paper or to panhandle, including panhandling with only one paper or selling an issue more than 4 weeks old.
- I will wear and display my badge when selling papers and refrain from wearing it or other Groundcover gear when engaged in other activities.
- I will only purchase the paper from Groundcover Staff and will not sell to or buy papers from other vendors who have been suspended or terminated.
- I agree to treat all customers, staff, and other vendors respectfully. I will not "hard sell," threaten, harass or pressure customers, staff, or other vendors verbally or physically.
- I will not sell Groundcover under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- I understand that I am not a legal employee of Groundcover but a contracted worker responsible for my own well-being and income.
- I understand that my badge is property of Groundcover and will not deface it. I will present my badge when purchasing the papers.
- I agree to stay off private property when selling Groundcover.
- I understand to refrain from selling on public buses, federal property or stores unless there is permission from the owner.
- I agree to stay at least one block away from another vendor in downtown areas. I will also abide by the Vendor Corner Policy.
- I understand that Groundcover strives to be a paper that covers topics of homelessness and poverty while providing sources of income for the homeless. I will try to help in this effort and spread the word.

If you would like to report a violation of the Vendor Code or leave positive review of a Vendor experience please email contact@groundcovernews.com or fill out the contact form on our website.

CROSSWORD

International Network of Street Papers



ACROSS

1. Fast-moving card game
5. Intensifies, with "up"
9. Deadly
14. One of the hyperbolic functions
15. "General Hospital," e.g.
16. Liturgical vestment
17. Technique for recording brain structure or activity
20. Ancient assembly area
21. Side effect for a stoner, with "the"
22. Reddish purple
25. "So ___ me!"
26. Sprites
28. Red ink amount
32. Limited, as hearing
36. Salk's conquest
37. Independent fertilization process used by some plants
40. Accustom
41. They're often mixed
42. Clash of heavyweights
43. Park place?
45. Dog holder
46. Snail or slug
51. Times for relaxation
56. Lid or lip application
57. Agency
60. Contents of a cabinet
61. "Pumping ___"
62. Above
63. Swelling
64. Golf rental
65. Penny

DOWN

1. Cook, as clams
2. African blade akin to a machete
3. In disguise, slangily
4. When doubled, words of comfort
5. ___ Wednesday
6. Bygone bird
7. ___ Pilot
8. Partner
9. Madcap comedy
10. Asian nurse
11. Plains dwelling
12. Advil target
13. Meadows (Var.)
18. Wind instrument of one Greek god
19. Lions' prey
23. Novice (Brit.)
24. Figure skater's jump
27. Do-nothing
28. French novelist Pierre
29. Assortment
30. Noun suffix
31. Princes, e.g.
32. Egyptian fertility goddess
33. Children's ___
34. Pudding fruit
35. Natural hairstyle
36. Kneecap
38. Mosque V.I.P.
39. Canceled
43. Expert
44. Low on iron
45. Anatomical sac
47. Light purple
48. Come together as one
49. Determined to do
50. Underground chamber
51. "___ finds a way": Dr. Ian Malcolm
52. "National Velvet" author Bagnold
53. Wight, for one
54. Part of a wineglass
55. "Que ___, ___" (Doris Day song)
58. Postal motto conjunction
59. Channel or explosive

Travels with Dreamer part IV: Hitchhiker's guide to ... Florida

STEVEN
Groundcover vendor No. 668

Dreamer and I took the advice of the giggly judge and smart ass cop and we hitchhiked away from Panama City. I've not been back but I've since seen it on MTV for spring break shenanigans and it makes me wish I'd been arrested somewhere cooler. We got a ride almost right away. It was uncanny and set us up for disappointment later down the road.

Hitchhiking is mostly hiking. Our first lift was our only creepy ride and while for sure creepy to us, it really wasn't. I didn't believe for a second we were in danger. He pulled over as soon as I asked. He was a guy shooting his shot with a couple young dudes, got shot down and was cool about it. As a couple of 90s kids with a constant barrage of anti-gay (especially with AIDS) upbringing, we were pretty cool about it, considering. Many young men (sigh) to this day aver how they would kick someone's ass for coming on to them. Well, we didn't think like that, but being dumb kids, we wanted out and he let us out with no fuss. Still, we were a bit shaken so we just walked for quite a while.

If you thought we'd learned any wariness from this cautionary tale ... you'd be wrong. We were, I remind you, nineteen years old. As we were walking in the Florida heat, a beat-up blue work truck and an old (probably middle-aged) blond, hippy-looking dude asked if we needed a ride. We jumped in without hesitation. He made small talk as we rode a bit.

"Where we headed?"

"New Orleans."

"Where you guys from?"

"Michigan." Dreamer didn't say anything.

I asked, "What do you do man?"

"I'm a house painter."

"Cool, cool."

Like this, it progresses a bit then he hits us with the plan he came up with. You see, he was seeing if we were cool while we were trying to see if he was cool. Both parties seemed to land on yes. His plan was pretty straightforward. He had some shit to do so he would drop us off at this cool spot he knew at a nearby lake to wait for him for a little while, then he'd come scoop us up. We'd swing by his place and we'd wait in the truck while his ol' lady whipped us up some sandwiches, Then he'd take us a good clip down the road. Oh and here's a matchbox of "Jamaican" weed for while you wait.

"Cool?"

Dreamer and I glanced at each other, "Well, hell yeah!" we said.

If this seems sinister to you, you are smarter than we were, but it wasn't sinister at all. The darkest moment in this whole thing was while we were sitting at this beautiful, scenic Florida lake spot checking out the crazy buds this guy had given us, thinking we had no way to smoke it. We're looking for pop cans (locally called soda or Coke) and whatnot. No dice. When we got to the spot it looked real nice, serene, shaded. He had given us what he called Jamaican buds. I still don't know what Jamaican weed looks like; I sure didn't then, but I can see it clearly in my mind's eye today. Stuffed in this matchbox were the stickiest, stinkiest, stankiest, dankest, greenest, purple haired, skunkiest, High Times article kind of buds I'd ever seen. As he drove off was when we realized we had no way to smoke this Cheech and Chong shit.

Dejected, finding nothing to use to smoke, we sat at this fantastic little beach and sulked. Absently, knowing it wouldn't be there, but like when you're looking for something and you check the same places multiple times, I reached into my pocket and jumped up from the log ecstatically shouting at Dreamer and brandishing my brass and wood weed pipe. We did our little happy dances then went to Jamaica. It was a great afternoon, no alligators, and the guy made good. He came back around dusk and picked our high asses up with a smirk. The three of us swung by his place. We waited not very long til he jumped back into the truck with a paper bag he shoved at me and which I promptly stored away and off we went.

The old hippy took us a good clip down the road and dropped us off where he thought might be a good place for us, then off he went with a "good luck" and a "I wish I could come" and a wave. We crushed those sandwiches before anything else and his ol' lady's sandwiches were the best I'd ever had (sorry Mom). We got a ride pretty quick from there and I learned no ride is better than any ride sometimes. The guy had said he was only going as far as X. We didn't know shit but were in the mindset to just get the ride so we were like "whatever man, cool."

After he dropped us off we walked through the muggy Mississippi night seeing no cars for what seemed like hours. Dreamer and I ended up sleeping in a ditch for a while, got up while it was still dark and continued our trudge. We didn't feel like we were hikers now we felt like trudgers. We didn't see the adventure at this point. We felt like Hobbits in cursed swamps. This curse, we agreed with a look, culminated when a Sheriff pulled up and ordered us into the back of his car. We were young and so tired we didn't say anything, we just got in and rode in silence.

An indeterminate time later he pulls over, orders us out and drives off. All he said to us was orders in and out. We stood bewildered and elated watching his taillights diminish in the black, swampy distance. Dreamer and I looked at each other under the light cast by the stars of the confederacy, shrugged, slung our bags and moved off. It was slow going; Dreamer's ankle was still jacked. He was a tough kid but he didn't have his crutches any more. It seems the police in Florida didn't think he needed them anymore I guess. Anyway they were gone. He insisted he was fine to carry his own kit so we walked on into the bayou's night.

It gets a bit weird here. I'd never heard of what happened and I haven't heard of anything like it since. I've been called a liar to my face over this, more than once. It happened.

We'd walked less than an hour when another Sheriff pulled up and ordered us into his cruiser. It was the same deal, everyone sitting in silence; he drove a good ways then kicked us out without a word other than get in get out. Weird, we thought, shrugged as he drove off then started trudging. It was the middle of the night at this point.

This happens a third time! I'm beyond nonplussed and have to speak up. I ask politely, what the F is going on here? The Sheriff, obviously not feeling up for small talk but maybe realizing I might be the type to pester him on this sighed and said, "Nobody wants the headache of a truck fulla good ol' boys finding you long hairs and disappearing your asses in them swamps, sure as spit." That was that.

There were a couple more Sheriffs but they seemed to stop bothering when the sun came up. We were pretty close to New Orleans by then and got a ride pretty quick with some guy. I don't remember the guy. Just kept to himself but I remember the ride. An amazing, magical heart-rending stretch of road I'll not forget if I Methuselah this world. I should remember him better, he was a good ride. Drove us a long ways without any hassle and dropped us right in Jackson Square, which was where we wanted to go but didn't know it.

Here's the rub; approaching NOLA from the east is this crazy long, low (like on the water low) bridge, I think it may be famous for how long it is or something? I'm not sure, I'll just say, it's no Mackinac Bridge. It sits right flat on the water and goes on forever. We were crossing going west in the morning hours. The sun was up in all its southern glory at our backs so we could appreciate its light. Of course the calm still water was the lead tech for nature's light show, but as with the driver I barely remember it.

What I do remember with sticking clarity are the butterflies. The mf-ing butterflies. Delicate little white butterflies flitting all around in the thousands, tens of thousands. They too caught the sun's light as they danced. In my head they were singing. The memory is slightly marred however because the dawn light wasn't the only thing these "poems made life" caught. They caught the front of this guy's truck as well, in multitudes. Don't think this guy's truck was the only vehicle on the road either. It put a pallet on my reverie but also I think was good for my mindset as I careened into The Big Easy with no plan, no money, no connections, nowhere to go. This was New Orleans in the '90s. It was on the news not so much for its jazz and restaurant scenes but for its daily tally of murders. I'd have done well to remember that. I mean, I didn't, but I would have done well to. This wasn't Disneyland we were going to.

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Dealing with intrusiveness

PEDRO CAMPOS
Groundcover vendor No. 652

We have much more information today about others than they may have about us. The information society promotes an expansion of information and knowledge-related values, and understanding this framework becomes a key element in many situations we face in our daily lives. This process is creating a public sphere where people can search for information as well as express their thinking and participate collaboratively in building theories, questioning their backgrounds, policies and decisions at the constitutional level.

Even with efficient privacy rules, at some level we have less privacy today than we had before. The accumulation of available data and the evolution of statistical tools generate greater sociometric (statistics for social sciences) analyses with respect to citizenship, democracy, culture, education and income generation in the context of new information and communication technologies.

We are heading toward a pervasive, privacy-intrusive future. When the intrusion is the same to anyone, that makes it fair and democratic. When everybody has equal and free access to all information, one looks after another's actions and together they play the watchdog function.

Intrusiveness is the next privacy protection paradigm. There is no need for people to fear intrusiveness; the free flow of information is a good thing and this is what we shall protect. People must take care of their real and virtual actions because they are visible now to everyone. The best we can do is work constantly on our identity building projects (pluralistic perspective) because these icons become essentially who-where-what you are. New learning processes are needed and possible.

The future looks bright. This is the moment for people to become aware of risks online and learn how to best protect themselves and their communities. Cases of privacy breach are lessons in technology and governance. People learn through mistakes. The media can play a huge role for the awareness of privacy issues.

The Internet is now a ubiquitous (virtual + real) scenario, demanding new forms of standardization processes, legislation on Internet Service Providers to implement deep packet inspection (DPI) technology and to make it available to authorities when needed. Principles of responsibility should apply — social, environmental and cultural. Both developed and developing countries must bear the cost of DPI implementation in a global effort to curb cybercrime. It is mostly a matter of cultural and political choice if this policy would actually harm users' privacy. The real technical experts and hackers and crackers have many ways to commit cybercrime. Intelligence teams already study these encryption techniques and public good should benefit from these initiatives.

Brazil has invested a lot of money in security and privacy issues. The Brazilian Legislative and Justice Commission has initiated specific legislation to avoid cybercrime. There are 13 new laws including legislation to prevent racism and pedophile activity and to protect privacy. To help and facilitate police investigations, Internet Service Providers are now supposed to monitor all available information under their domain. If there is a suspicion of cybercrime, there must be a judicial authorization for the police to access someone's private information. It is also clear that in this information technology era, there are no more secrets or privacy in the strict sense.

As with many issues impacted by globalization, it is a hard thing to conciliate cultural differences. Every day we move one step forward to the universalization of human rights.

In creating a global public sphere where people can search for information freely, human rights should guide us in this march towards the future.

As Agnieszka Wrzesie, Diplo Fellow (www.diplomacy.edu) from Poland, said in one of the internet Governance Advanced Courses on Privacy Chat: "That's why we should use all the channels possible to educate people. Empowerment is the key."

➡ **CO-OP** from page 6

To become a member at the Ypsilanti Food Co-op there is an annual fee of $20 and then you become a member/owner. If you want, you can pay a one-time $200 fee and become a lifetime member. From this point, you are on your way to perceivably healthier living and the opportunity to work and volunteer in the community, which could add up to saving you 14% off groceries. And as a member/owner, if the co-op makes an annual profit you will receive a percentage.

The seven principles of a co-op:

1. Voluntary and Open Membership: Cooperatives are voluntary organizations, open to all people able to use their services and willing to accept the responsibilities of membership, regardless of gender, social, racial, political or religious affiliation.

2. Democratic Member Control: Cooperatives are democratic organizations controlled by their members - those who buy the goods or use the services of the cooperative — who actively participate in setting policies and making decisions.

3. Members' Economic participation: Members contribute equally to, and democratically control, the capital of the cooperative. This benefits members in proportion to the business they conduct with the cooperative rather than on the capital invested.

4. Autonomy and Independence: Cooperatives are autonomous, self-help organizations controlled by their members. If the co-op enters into agreement with other organizations or raises capital from external sources, it is done so based on terms that ensure democratic control by the members and maintains the cooperative autonomy.

5. Education, Training, and Information: Cooperatives provide education and training for members, elected representatives, staff and employees so they can effectively participate in the organization. Member also inform the general public about the nature and benefits of cooperatives

6. Cooperation Among Cooperatives: Cooperatives serve their members most effectively and strengthen the cooperatives movement by working together local, national and international structures.

7. Concern for Community: Cooperatives work for the sustainable development of their communities through policies approved by their members.

Explore Michigan co-ops!

In the 1970s there were over twenty five food cooperatives in the state of Michigan, but now there are only eleven.

- People's Food Co-op (Ann Arbor). Use the Groundcover News coupon on page 12 when you visit!
- Detroit People's Food Co-op — the first Black-led food cooperative just opened its doors on May 1, 2024.
- Grain Train Natural Foods Market (Petoskey and Boyne locations)
- Green Tea Co-op Market (Mt Pleasant)
- Keweenaw Co-op (Hancock)
- Marquette Food Co-op
- Oryana West (Traverse City)
- Oryana Community Co-op (Traverse City)
- PFC Natural Grocery & Deli (Kalamazoo)
- Ypsilanti Food Co-op

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Healthy breakfast smoothie

ELIZABETH BAUMAN
Groundcover contributor

Ingredients:
1/2 cup unsweetened almond milk or oat milk
1/2 cup nonfat plain Greek yogurt
1 cup baby spinach
1 medium banana, sliced and frozen
½ cup frozen or fresh pineapple chunks
2 teaspoon chia seeds (optional)
Directions:
Place all ingredients in a blender and blend until smooth.

Drink this and a handful of almonds to start your day off right!

thru the ...

SHAWN SWOFFER
Groundcover vendor No. 574

thru the country hills
thru the outspoken words
thru the birds of the trees
thru the controversy
thru the sun shining
thru the efforts of every person
thru the tall grass & flowers
thru the decesions of the people
thru the people
thru the environment
thru the everything & thru everyone
there is a white feather
that stops me cold
no matter what the feather
can represent solid peacefulness
as well as peaceful times

PUZZLE SOLUTIONS

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F	I	L	E	S	■	I	R	O	N	■	A	T	O	P
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